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PETER DAVID • RYAN SOOK

X-FACTOR

Calero • Von Grawbadger • Villarrubia



DIRECT EDITION

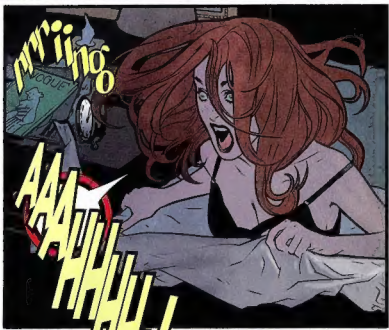
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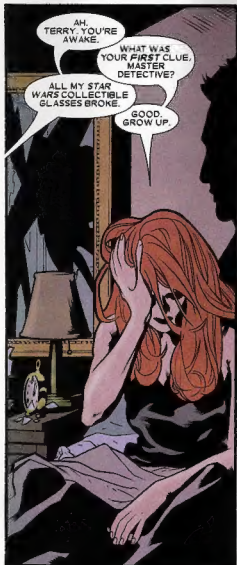
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AH, TERRY. YOU'RE AWAKE.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST CLUE, MASTER DETECTIVE?

ALL MY STAR WARS COLLECTIBLE GLASSES BROKE.

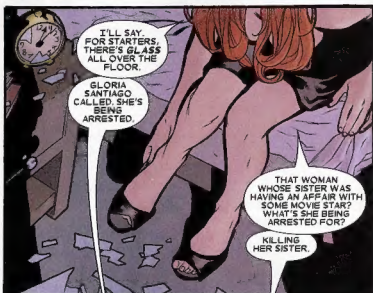
GOOD. GROW UP.



YOU DRESSED?

YES, MADROX. I'M WEARING A VERA WANG EVENING GOWN AND STILETTO HEELS.

GOOD. GRAB YOUR PURSE. WE HAVE A SITUATION.



I'LL SAY. FOR STARTERS, THERE'S GLASS ALL OVER THE FLOOR.

GLORIA SANTIAGO CALLED. SHE'S BEING ARRESTED.

THAT WOMAN WHOSE SISTER WAS HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH SOME MOVIE STAR? WHAT'S SHE BEING ARRESTED FOR?

KILLING HER SISTER.



LORD, REALLY?

SHE'S AT THE MARQUIS HOTEL ACROSS TOWN.

GIMME FIVE MINUTES.



OKAY! I'LL GO WARM UP THE CAR, THEN.



DON'T BOTHER.

WHO THE--? OH, RIGHT. LAYLA MILLER, THE GIRL WHO 'KNOWS STUFF.'

WHY SHOULDN'T I BOTHER WITH THE CAR?

YOU'LL SEE.

O KAY, IT'S TIME TO ADMIT
THAT I'M FINDING LAYLA
EXTREMELY DISCONCERTING.

SHE SHOWED UP AT OUR
HEADQUARTERS OUT OF
NOWHERE. EVERYONE
ASSUMES THAT EVERYONE
ELSE KNOWS WHY SHE'S
THERE.

SHE KEEPS SAYING SHE
"KNOWS STUFF," AND
I'M NOT SURE WHAT
THAT MEANS, EXCEPT...

...WELL...

...SHE KEEPS KNOWING
STUFF, KNOWING IT
BEFORE WE DO, KNOWING
IT BEFORE ANYONE CAN.

THANK GOD
SHE'S ON
OUR SIDE...

...EXCEPT...HOW
DO I KNOW FOR A
FACT THAT SHE IS?

THE

BIG

BANG

IN A SOCIETY WHERE MUTANTS AND FORMER MUTANTS ALIKE FEEL THREATENED BY THE WORLD AROUND THEM, THEY TURN TO THEIR FIRST, BEST LINE OF DEFENSE: WHENEVER TROUBLE ARISES: X-FACTOR, THE PRIVATE DETECTIVE AGENCY FOUNDED BY MADROX THE MULTIPLE MAN.

X-FACTOR



THERE'S GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS. THE GOOD NEWS IS:

RICKTOR, SENT PLUMMETING TO HIS POTENTIAL DEATH THROUGH THE HOMICIDAL WHIMSY OF A MADROX DUPE, WAS SAVED BY MONET'S TIMELY ARRIVAL. AFTER INITIALLY BALKING AT THE IDEA, HE HAS PROVISIONALLY JOINED THE GROUP DESPITE HIS LACK OF POWERS.

X-FACTOR DEALT SPEEDILY AND EFFICIENTLY WITH ITS FIRST CLIENT, ONE GLORIA SANTIAGO WHO WAS CONVINCED THAT HER SISTER'S ERRATIC BEHAVIOR WAS DUE TO MIND CONTROL FROM AN EVIL MUTANT. SIRYN INVESTIGATED AND DISCOVERED THAT THE SISTER WAS INSTEAD SIMPLY INVOLVED IN A TORRID AFFAIR WITH MOVIE STAR JACK VAUGHN. CASE CLOSED, CHECK CASHED.

LAYLA MILLER HAS GOTTEN THE FILING SYSTEM STRAIGHTENED OUT.

THE BAD NEWS IS:

TENSIONS IN MUTANT TOWN ARE RISING AS DEMONSTRATORS-ALL FORMER MUTANTS-ARE CLASHING IN THE STREETS. HALF ARE ANGRY OVER THE DECIMATION, HALF ARE RELIEVED TO BE "NORMAL," AND TEMPERS ARE STARTING TO RUN HIGH.

MR. TRYP, THE HEAD OF SINGULARITY INVESTIGATIONS, IS PLOTTING IN CONJUNCTION WITH AN ELDERLY GUY WHO KIND OF LOOKS LIKE MERLIN, BUT IT'S NOT, TRUST US.

NO ONE ELSE BUT LAYLA UNDERSTANDS THE FILING SYSTEM SHE SET UP, AND NO ONE QUITE KNOWS WHAT SHE'S DOING THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.

MADROX, WHILE WONDERING WHAT HE'S GOING TO DO ABOUT THE FACT THAT HIS DUPES HAVE BECOME SO UNPREDICTABLE, GETS A PHONE CALL INFORMING HIM THAT GLORIA SANTIAGO HAS BEEN ARRESTED FOR THE MURDER OF HER SISTER.

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I'VE ONLY BRIEFLY MET OUR CLIENT, GLORIA SANTIAGO, ALTHOUGH TERRY WAS THE ONE WHO DUG UP THE DIRT ON HER SISTER.

I WISH I'D BEEN THERE WHEN GLORIA GOT THE NEWS. SEEING HER REACTION COULD GIVE ME A SENSE OF WHAT SHE MIGHT HAVE DONE.



JANSEN! SHUT OFF THE BLASTED SIREN!

BUT... IT'S NOT ON, SARGE!

OF COURSE IT IS! WHAT'RE YOU, DEAF?



NICE DISMOUNT.

TWO YEARS, OLYMPIC GYMNASTICS TEAM.



IS THERE ANYTHING THAT ONE OF YOUR DUPES HASN'T DONE ON YOUR BEHALF?

HAD SEX.

DOOR'S LOCKED.



SERIOUSLY?

YEAH, BUT I CAN PICK IT...

I MEAN ABOUT SEX.

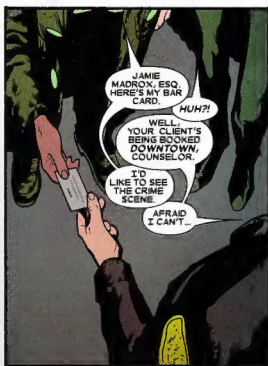
OH, NO, I WASN'T SERIOUS. MY DUPES HAVE BEEN PRETTY ACTIVE.

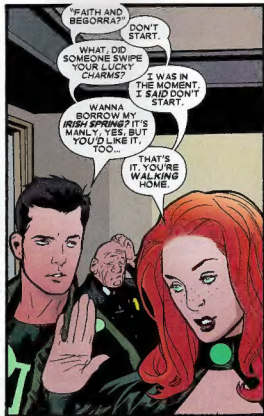
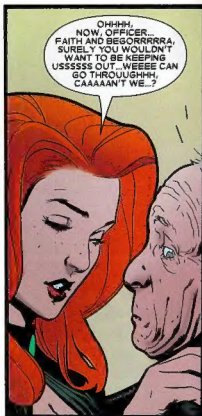
WHAT ABOUT YOU?



YOU KNOW... ACTUALLY, NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT...

I'M NOT SURE.





DETECTIVE...
THE LADY IS A MUTANT.
SHE'S KNOWN AS "SIRYN,"
AND AMONG OTHER
TALENTS...

...SHE CAN
MODULATE HER
VOICE TO MAKE
PEOPLE DO
WHATEVER SHE
WISHES.

FOR INSTANCE,
SHE COULD COMPEL
MY CLIENT TO MAKE A
FALSE CONFESSION,
AND HE'D THINK IT WAS
ALL HIS IDEA.

I SUGGEST
YOU GET SOME
COTTON BALLS FROM
THE BATHROOM, PLUG
YOUR EARS, AND ESCORT
HER OUT, ALONG WITH
HER BOSS, MR.
MADROX.

YOU KNOW
A GOOD DEAL
ABOUT ME, IT
SEEMS, MR...?

TRYP,
DAMIAN TRYP...
JUNIOR, TO BE
EXACT.

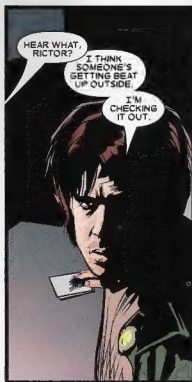
MY FATHER
AND I OVERSEE
SINGULARITY
INVESTIGATIONS.

YOU CAN
READ OUR
CARD WHILE
YOU LEAVE.





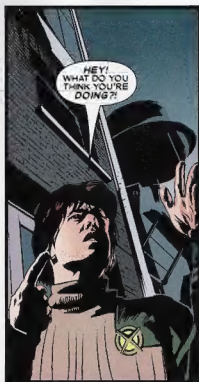
DID YOU HEAR THAT?



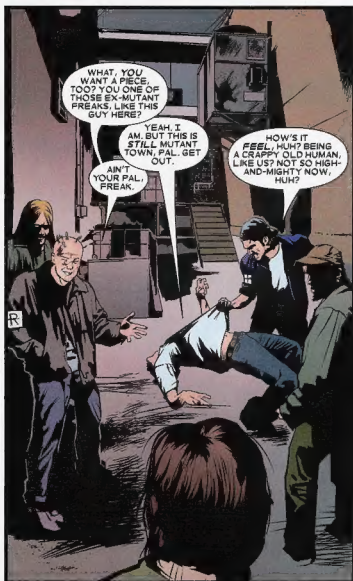
HEAR WHAT, RICTOR?

I THINK SOMEONE'S GETTING BEAT UP OUTSIDE.

I'M CHECKING IT OUT.



HEY! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?



WHAT, YOU WANT A PIECE, TOO? YOU ONE OF THOSE EX-MUTANT FREAKS, LIKE THIS GUY HERE?

YEAH, I AM, BUT THIS IS STILL MUTANT TOWN, PAL... GET OUT.

AIN'T YOUR PAL, FREAK.

HOW'S IT FEEL, HUH? BEING A CRAPPY OLD HUMAN, LIKE US? NOT SO HIGH-AND-MIGHTY NOW, HUH?



IF YOU CAME TO MUTANT TOWN LOOKING FOR TROUBLE...YOU'VE FOUND IT.

YEAH? AND WHO'S GONNA GIVE IT TO US?





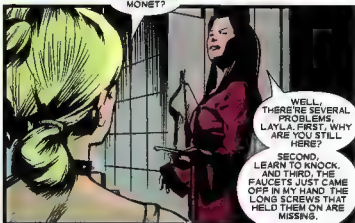


OH, FOR
CRYING OUT
LOUD!



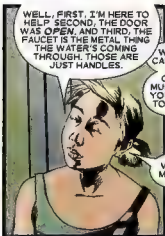
THIS IS
ABSDUR!
THIS PLACE IS
HELD TOGETHER
WITH SPIT
AND SAILING
WIRE!

IS THERE
A PROBLEM,
MONET?



WELL,
THERE'RE SEVERAL
PROBLEMS,
LAYLA. FIRST, WHY
ARE YOU STILL
HERE?

SECOND,
LEARN TO KNOCK.
AND THIRD, THE
FAUCETS JUST CAME
OFF IN MY HAND. THE
LONG SCREWS THAT
HELD THEM ON ARE
MISSING.



WELL, FIRST, I'M HERE TO
HELP. SECOND, THE DOOR
WAS OPEN, AND THIRD, THE
FAUCET IS THE METAL THING
THE WATER'S COMING
THROUGH. THOSE ARE
JUST HANDLES.

WHO
CARES?

OKAY, MUNCHKIN
YOU WANT
TO HELP?

VERY
MUCH



FINE
CALL ME
WHEN YOU'VE
FIXED IT

YOU
GOT IT



WIDDO WOULD TELL
ME ABOUT IT LATER
THE FIRST SERIOUS RIOT
IN MUTANT TOWN

THEY CALLED THEMSELVES
"REALS." IT'S UNCLEAR WHERE
THE MOVEMENT STARTED
COLLEGE CAMPUSES BARS
K.K.K. MEETINGS WHATEVER

MEMBERSHIP WAS SIMPLE ALL YOU
HAD TO DO WAS BE THRILLED THAT
"HOMO SUPERIOR" HAD BEEN BOOTED
DOWN TO PLAIN OLD "HOMO SAPIENS"

AND BELIEVE THAT THE REAL
HUMAN THING TO DO WAS
KICK A MAN WHEN HE'S DOWN

IF ONLY SIRYN AND
I HAD BEEN THERE

UNFORTUNATELY



...WE WERE
OCCUPIED
ELSEWHERE



OKAY, GLORIA,
UNDERSTAND THAT IF
YOU DID DO IT, I DON'T
WANT YOU TO SAY SO.
BECAUSE THIS
PLACE IS PROBABLY
BUGGED

GOD AS
MY WITNESS.
I I DON'T
KNOW.

I WENT
TO THE HOTEL TO
CONFRONT THIS JACK
VAUGHN, THIS...MOVIE STAR
PERSON. FOR TAKING
ADVANTAGE OF
MY SISTER.



HE
OPENED THE
DOOR

AND I DON'T
REMEMBER ANYTHING
ELSE UNTIL THE POLICE
WERE ARRESTING ME



you hear
her voice? Flat
life ass. Could be
plain old shock

Could be
Or maybe she was
mindwiped by a
telepath

you think
Singularity has
those kinds of
resources?



I got
this...yikes
off that trip guy
I can't explain
it, but...

I think
they're more than
just some agents
that clean up after
messes that high
rollers get
themselves into.

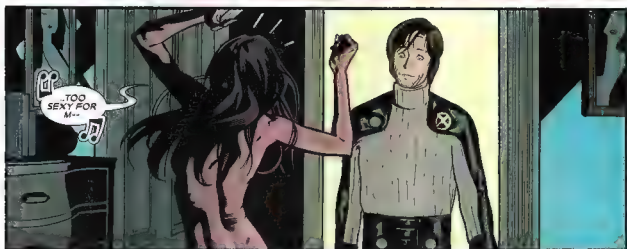
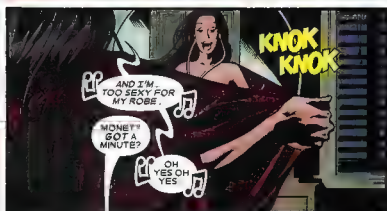
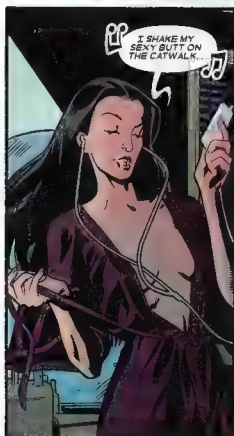
Either way,
though...we owe
them payback

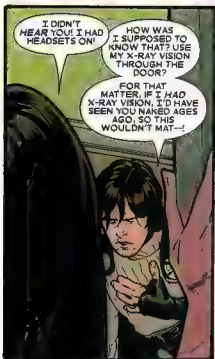
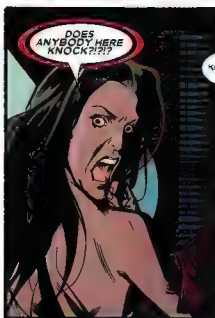


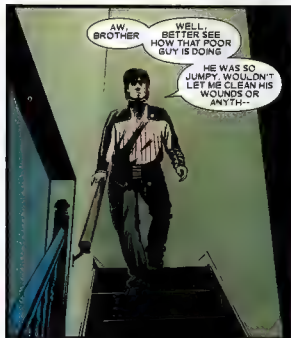
It'll wait
Look...I say
we bring
Monet in.

Have her
scan Gloria's
mind. See where
we stand

Say what
you will about
it--







AW,
BROTHER

WELL,
BETTER SEE
HOW THAT POOR
GUY IS DOING

HE WAS SO
JUMPY, WOULDN'T
LET ME CLEAN HIS
WOUNDS OR
ANYTH--



OOOOFFFF!!



MR. TRYP
SUBJECT IS
DOWN.

YES, I'VE
GOT ONE OF THEIR
KITCHEN KNIVES I'LL
MAKE IT LOOK LIKE
HE CUT HIS OWN
THROAT



I
WOULDN'T
DO THAT.



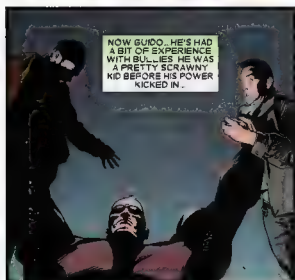
IF
I WERE
YOU



IT HAD BEEN BUILDING UP SINCE THE
DECIMATION EVEN THE FORMER
MUTANTS WERE TERRIBLY DIVIDED

SOME BELIEVING IT A BLESSING
AND OTHERS A CURSE, FISTFIGHTS
OVER MATTERS OF PHILOSOPHY
THAT HAD BECOME MATTERS OF
LIFE AND DEATH

BUT THE REALS
THEY WERE JUST
BULLIES



NOW GUIDO... HE'S HAD
A BIT OF EXPERIENCE
WITH BULLIES HE WAS
A PRETTY SCRAWNY
KID BEFORE HIS POWER
KICKED IN..



..WOULDN'T
KNOW IT TO LOOK
AT HIM NOW



PULL HIM
DOWN! PULL
HIM DOWN!!!



GUIDO SPENT HALF AN HOUR
FILLING ME IN ON EVERY
DETAIL. AS FOR RAHNE

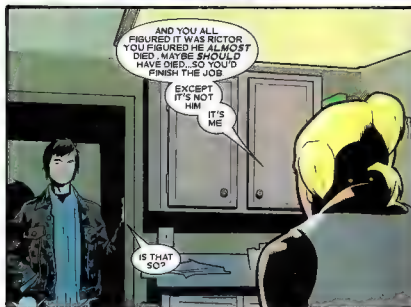


SHE WOULDN'T TALK
ABOUT IT NOT A WORD
NOT A SYLLABLE

BUT EVEN BACK IN HER
HUMAN FORM, THERE WAS
BLOOD BURIED DEEP
UNDER HER FINGERNAILS

I WONDER IF IT'LL
EVER COME OUT











X-FACTOR

Editor's Note: Due to my being a dodo head, I misspelled Dennis Calero's name not once, not twice, but three times in X-FACTOR #2. Dennis, you did a great job on the issue and this one. Thank you for your help. I can't wait to see your first full issue (Issue #5) and I apologize for misspelling your name. You rock, my man.

--Andy

Hi, Peter David here for our second letters page (and they said we wouldn't last.) Now... there was a recurring theme in the comments on issue #2—from Nick Marino, Michael Lapinski, Lewis-Paul Stuchbury, Butch Mapa, and others—so I figured I'd address it in one shot. And that recurring theme was dissatisfaction with the somewhat varied art style, mixing and matching Ryan Sook and Dennis Calero.

Granted, I'm merely the scripter, but I'm going to be saying "we" because all decisions Andy Schmidt made were in consultation with me, so I share responsibility. And what it comes down to is: We had a priorities collision. Due to prior commitments, Ryan got a later start on X-FACTOR #1 than anticipated, but from a business standpoint, two issues of X-FACTOR had to ship by the end of the year. No arguing, no leeway.

Now...we could have had Ryan skip issue #2 entirely and go straight to issue #3. The problem is that those fans who buy the title for Sook would have felt they had been forsook. And we at Marvel were reluctant to forsake those who were for Sook. So we felt it best

that—rather than not have issue #2 Sook at all—we would have it Sook as much as possible. Maximum Sookage, as it were.

So we doled out the storylines to the different artists and got the issue out on time. We know it didn't Sook as much as Sook fans would have liked, but we hope it Sooked enough. And by the way, we have no intention of slighting Dennis Calero (**Editor's Note:** Well, I clearly did, hence the misspelling of his name three times—Andy), who we personally think did, and continues to do, a yeoman job on the series. But we're left with an interesting question: When such circumstances arise, would you guys prefer a single artist for consistency's sake, or as much of the regular guy as possible? You tell us.

As for the coloring boner on page 18...c'mon, guys. Simply complaining because Monet accidentally got transformed into Siryn for a page? Where's the imagination in that? Y'know what: For this one time, I'm reactivating the No-Prize. Send me your best explanation as to why that was not, in fact, a coloring mistake, but instead a cunningly brilliant part of the mighty Marvel masterplan. I'll send a No-Prize to the best answer. Darned if I know what it'll be, but it'll be something.

To X-Factor:

I love the new series. When I first saw it I wasn't sure I would like it, but it's awesome and I can't stop reading. I haven't been reading comics long and I'm glad I get a chance to read something with these characters.

Thanks for bringing it back and I love the dark new look, I've never read anything in Marvel like it.

--Chris Holstein,
Glendale, AZ

To X-Factor:

If there is any new title that deserves to stand the test of time X-FACTOR is it—I'm excited to follow the exploits of this very unique group of adventurers. Nothing I've read lately has evoked in me the feel and excitement of the first time I picked up an issue of X-MEN so long ago.

With its unique film noir/pulp comic approach I'm hooked -- I'm looking forward to X-FACTOR every month!

--J.C. Alvarez
New York, NY 11101

NEXT ISSUE:



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